

*Pedro.* You embrace your charge too willingly: I thinke this is your daughter.

*Leonato.* Her mother hath many times told me so.

*Bened.* Were you in doubt that you askt her?

*Leonato.* Signior Benedicke, no, for then were you a childe.

*Pedro.* You haue it full Benedicke, we may ghesse by this, what you are, being a man, truly the Lady fathers her selfe: be happie Lady, for you are like an honorable father.

*Ben.* If Signior *Leonato* be her father, she would not haue his head on her shoulders for al Messina, as like him as she is.

*Beat.* I wonder that you will still be talking, signior Benedicke, no body markes you.

*Ben.* What my deere Ladie Disdaine! are you yet liuing?

*Beat.* Is it possible Disdaine should die, while shee hath such meete foode to feede it, as Signior Benedicke? Curtesie it selfe must conuert to Disdaine, if you come in her presence.

*Ben.* Then is curtesie a turne-coate, but it is certaine I am loued of all Ladies, onely you excepted: and I would I could finde in my heart that I had not a hard heart, for truly I loue none.

*Beat.* A deere happinesse to women, they would els haue bene troubled with a pernicious Suter, I thanke God and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that, I had rather heare my Dog barke at a Crow, than a man sweare he loues me.

*Ben.* God keepe your Ladiship still in that minde, so some Gentleman or other shall scape a predestinate scratcht face.

*Beat.* Scratching could not make it worse, and 'twere such a face as yours were.

*Ben.* Well, you are a rare Parrat teacher.

*Beat.* A bird of my tongue, is better than a beast of your.

*Ben.* I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer, but keepe your way a Gods name, I haue done.

*Beat.* You alwaies end with a Iadesricke, I know you of old.

*Pedro.* This is the summe of all: *Leonato*, signior *Claudio*, and signior *Benedicke*; my deere friend *Leonato*, hath inuited you all, I tell him we shall stay here, at the least a moneth, and he heartily praies some occasion may detain vs longer: I dare sweare hee is no hypocrite, but praies from his heart.

*Leon.* If you sweare, my Lord, you shall not be forsworne, let mee bid you welcome, my Lord, being reconciled to the Prince your brother: I owe you all dutie.

*John.* I thanke you, I am not of many words, but I thanke you.

*Leon.* Please it your grace leade on?

*Pedro.* Your hand *Leonato*, we will goe together.

*Exeunt. Maenet Benedicke and Claudio.*

*Clau.* Benedicke, didst thou note the daughter of signior *Leonato*?

*Ben.* Inoted her not, but I lookt on her.

*Clau.* Is she not a modest yong Ladie?

*Ben.* Doe you question me as an honest man should doe, for my simple true iudgement? or would you haue me speake after my custome, as being a professed tyrant to their sexe?

*Clau.* No, I pray thee speake in sober iudgement.

*Ben.* Why yfaith me thinks shee's too low for a hie praise, too browne for a faire praise, and too little for a great praise, onely this commendation I can afford her, that were shee other then she is, she were vnhandsome, and being no other, but as she is, I doe not like her.

*Clau.* Thou think'st I am in sport, I pray thee tell me truly how thou lik'st her.

*Ben.* Would you buie her, that you enquier after her?

*Clau.* Can the world buie such a iewell?

*Ben.* Yea, and a case to put it into, but speake you this with a sad brow? Or doe you play the flowing iacke, to tell vs Cupid is a good Hare-finder, and Vulcan a rare Carpenter: Come, in what key shall aman take you to goe in the song?

*Clau.* In mine eie, she is the sweetest Ladie that euer I lookt on.

*Ben.* I can see yet without spectacles, and I see no such matter: there's her cosin, and she were not posselt with a furie, exceeds her as much in beautie, as the first of Maie doth the last of December: but I hope you haue no intent to turne husband, haue you?

*Clau.* I would scarce trust my selfe, though I had sworne the contrarie, if *Hero* would be my wife.

*Ben.* If come to this? in faith hath not the world one man but he will weare his cap with suspicion? shall I neuer see a batcheller of three score againe? goe to yfaith, and thou wilt needes thrust thy necke into a yoke, weare the print of it, and sigh away fundaines: looke, *don Pedro* is returned to seeke you.

*Enter don Pedro, John the bastard.*

*Pedro.* What secret hath held you here, that you followed not to *Leonatoes*?

*Bened.* I would your Grace would constrain me to tell.

*Pedro.* I charge thee on thy allegiance.

*Ben.* You heare, Count *Claudio*, I can be secret as a dumbe man, I would haue you thinke so (but on my allegiance, marke you this, on my allegiance) hee is in loue, With who? now that is your Graces part: marke how short his answere is, with *Hero*, *Leonatoes* short daughter.

*Clau.* If this were so, so were it vitred.

*Bened.* Like the old tale, my Lord, it is not so, nor 'twas not so: but indeede, God forbid it should be so.

*Clau.* If my passion change not shortly, God forbid it should be otherwise.

*Pedro.* Amen, if you loue her, for the Ladie is verie well worthie.

*Clau.* You speake this to fetch me in, my Lord.

*Pedro.* By my troth I speake my thought.

*Clau.* And in faith, my Lord, I spoke mine.

*Bened.* And by my two faiths and troths, my Lord, I speake mine.

*Clau.* That I loue her, I feele.

*Pedro.* That she is worthie, I know.

*Bened.* That I neither feele how shee should be loued, nor know how shee should be worthie, is the opinion that fire cannot melt out of me, I will die in it at the stake.

*Pedro.* Thou wast euer an obstinate heretique in the despight of Beautie.

*Clau.* And neuer could maintaine his part, but in the force of his will.

*Ben.* That

*Ben.* That a woman conceiued me, I thanke her: that she brought mee vp, I likewise giue her most humble thanks: but that I will haue a rechate winded in my forehead, or hang my bugle in an inuisible baldricke, all women shall pardon me: because I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I will doe my selfe the right to trust none: and the fine is, (for the which I may goe the finer) I will liue a Batchellor.

*Pedro.* I shall see thee ere I die, looke pale with loue.

*Ben.* With anger, with sicknesse, or with hunger, my Lord, not with loue: proue that euer I loose more blood with loue, then I will get againe with drinking, picke out mine eyes with a Ballet-makers penne, and hang me vp at the doore of a brothel-houise for the signe of blinde Cupid.

*Pedro.* Well, if euer thou doost fall from this faith, thou wilt proue a notable argument.

*Ben.* If I do, hang me in a bottle like a Cat, & shoot at me, and he that hit's me, let him be clapt on the shoulder, and cal'd *Adam*.

*Pedro.* Well, as time shall trie: In time the sauage Bull doth beare the yoke.

*Ben.* The sauage bull may, but if euer the sensible *Benedicke* beare it, plucke off the bulles hornes, and let them in my forehead, and let me be vildely painted, and in such great Letters as they write, heere is good horse to hire: let them signifie vnder my signe, here you may see *Benedicke* the married man.

*Clau.* If this should euer happen, thou wouldst bee home mad.

*Pedro.* Nay, if Cupid haue not spent all his Quiuer in Venice, thou wilt quake for this shortly.

*Ben.* I looke for an earthquake too then.

*Pedro.* Well, you will temporize with the houres, in the meane time, good Signior *Benedicke*, repaire to *Leonatoes*, commend me to him, and tell him I will not faile him at supper, for indeede he hath made great preparation.

*Ben.* I haue almost matter enough in me for such an Embassage, and so I commit you.

*Clau.* To the tuition of God. From my house, if I had it.

*Pedro.* The sixt of Iuly. Your louing friend, *Benedicke*.

*Ben.* Nay mocke not, mocke not; the body of your discourse is sometime guarded with fragments, and the guardes are but slightly basted on neither, ere you flout old ends any further, examine your conscience, and so I leaue you.

*Exit.*

*Clau.* My Liege, your Highnesse now may doe mee good.

*Pedro.* My loue is thine to teach, teach it but how, And thou shalt see how apt it is to learne Any hard Lesson that may do thee good.

*Clau.* Hath *Leonato* any sonne my Lord?

*Pedro.* No childe but *Hero*, she's his onely heire.

Doest thou affect her (*Claudio*)?

*Clau.* O my Lord,

When you went onward on this ended action,

I look'd vpon her with a souldiers eie,

That lik'd, but had a rougher taske in hand,

Than to driue liking to the name of loue:

But now I am return'd, and that warre-thoughts

Haue left their places vacant: in their roomes,

Come thronging soft and delicate desires,

All prompting mee how faire yong *Hero* is,

Saying I lik'd her ere I went to warres.

*Pedro.* Thou wilt be like a louer presently, And tire the hearer with a booke of words:

If thou doest loue faire *Hero*, cherish it, And I will breake with her: wait not to this end, That thou beganst to twist so fine a story?

*Clau.* How sweetly doe you minister to loue, That know loues griefe by his complexion!

But lest my liking might too sodaine seeme,

I would haue salu'd it with a longer treatise.

*Ped.* What need'st bridge much broder then the flood?

The fairest graunt is the necessitie:

Looke what will serue, is fit: 'tis once, thou louest,

And I will fit thee with the remedie,

I know we shall haue reuelling to night,

I will assume thy part in some disguise,

And tell faire *Hero* I am *Claudio*,

And in her bosome Ile vnclasp my heart,

And take her hearing prisoner with the force

And strong incounter of my amorous tale:

Then after, to her father will I breake,

And the conclusion is, shee shall be thine,

In practise let vs put it presently. *Exeunt.*

*Enter Leonato and an old man, brother to Leonato.*

*Leo.* How now brother, where is my cosen your son: hath he provided this musicke?

*Old.* He is very busie about it, but brother, I can tell you newes that you yet dreamt not of.

*Leo.* Are they good?

*Old.* As the euents stamps them, but they haue a good couer: they shew well outward, the Prince and Count *Claudio* walking in a thick pleached alley in my orchard, were thus ouer-heard by a man of mine: the Prince discovered to *Claudio* that hee loued my niece your daughter, and meant to acknowledge it this night in a dance, and if hee found her accordant, hee meant to take the present time by the top, and instantly breake with you of it.

*Leo.* Hath the fellow any wit that told you this?

*Old.* A good sharpe fellow, I will send for him, and question him your selfe.

*Leo.* No, no; wee will hold it as a dreame, till it appeare it selfe: but I will acquaint my daughter withall, that she may be the better prepared for an answer, if peradventure this bee true: goe you and tell her of it: coosins, you know what you haue to doe, O I crie you mercie friend, goe you with mee and I will vse your skill, good cosin haue a care this busie time. *Exeunt.*

*Enter Sir John the Bastard, and Conrade his companion.*

*Con.* What the good yeere my Lord, why are you thus out of measure sad?

*John.* There is no measure in the occasion that breeds, therefore the sadnesse is without limit.

*Con.* You should heare reason.

*John.* And when I haue heard it, what blessing bringeth it?

*Con.* If not a present remedie, yet a patient sufferance.

*John.* I wonder that thou (being as thou saist thou art, borne vnder *Saturne*) goest about to apply a morall medicine, to a mortifying mischiefe: I cannot hide what I am: I must bee sad when I haue cause, and smile at no mans iests, eat when I haue stomacke, and wait for no mans leasure: sleepe when I am drowsie, and tend on no mans businesse, laugh when I am merry, and claw no man in his humor.

*Con.* Yea, but you must not make the full show of this, till you may doe it without controllment, you haue of late